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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/992,392	11/06/2001	David K. Locke	47079-0119	7604

30223 7590 11/29/2005
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EXAMINER

HOEL, MATTHEW D

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3713

DATE MAILED: 11/29/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/992,392	LOCKE ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Matthew D. Hoel	3713	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 June 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-37 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 06 November 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments filed June 30th, 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

2. The applicants have introduced Claims 34 to 37, adding new matter to and expanding the scope of the claims in an attempt to overcome the '881 reference cited by O'Neill in the previous office action. The limitations in these claims are not supported by the specification as explained in the 112 and 101 rejections below. The present examiner finds that the '881 reference was properly used in the 102 and 103 rejections of the last office action. The previous rejections are maintained, but the examiner feels the new 103 rejections more clearly demonstrate how the prior art renders the claims obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. The applicants in Claims 34 to 37 introduced newly claimed features, necessitating a new determination of novelty and non-obviousness, as well as a new prior art search. The applicants are reminded that in the interest of compact prosecution, all of the features enabled by the specification that are regarded as essential to the invention should be claimed before the first office action. Please see MPEP 707.06 and form paragraph 7-40.

3. Regarding the 102 rejections, the applicants state that the '881 reference does not identically show each of the claimed elements, citing *Diversitech Corp. v. Century Steps, Inc.* and *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.* The applicants do not state in the specification how they enable the mechanical reel embodiment of

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their invention, as explained in the 112 and 101 rejections below. The applicants state that every element must be "identically shown" when they don't show the mechanical embodiment in their specification. O'Neill properly interpreted the claims as broadly as reasonable in light of the specification and the knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art. Inoue in '881 does teach a continuous graphical element in Fig. 2 that gradually alternates between light and dark. The inner and outer reels of '881, Fig. 2, are functionally a single reel, as they are used in place of the single individual mechanical reel widely used in the art. The continuous graphical element of '881, Fig. 2, does extend between the adjacent discrete symbols of the outer reel, as it goes all the way around the reel. The translucent symbols of the outer reel are visually unified by the continuous graphical element, because as the inner reel spins around, the outer symbols appear to become alternately lighter and darker. The examiner concedes that the continuous graphical element is not visible outside of the discrete symbols as in Figs. 7 and 8 of the application, instead of being visible inside the translucent symbols as in Fig. 2 of '881, but this is not a claimed feature. Nowhere, in fact, do independent Claims 1, 9, 18, or 25 say that the discrete symbols or symbol positions are opaque and superimposed over the continuous graphical element.

4. Regarding the 103 rejections, the applicants state that the pattern on the inner reel (Fig. 2) of '881 does not constitute a continuous graphical feature. The squares on the inner reel alternate between light and dark all the way around the reel. The change in darkness of the squares is even and gradual. The translucent symbols on the outer reel would appear to get gradually darker and

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brighter in an alternating manner if the inner reel spun while the outer reel stood still. To apply the same line of thinking to the applicants' own specification would render the claimed game board path (Figs. 7 and 8; Page 7, Line 28 to Page 8, Line 19) as not being a continuous graphical element. The game board path of Figs. 7 and 8 are squares indicating positions on a MONOPOLY™ board.

These squares are all different from each other; at least the squares on the inner reel of '881 are gradually alternating shades of darkness. These give more of the claimed unity to the symbols than the game board path of the applicants' invention does.

5. With regard to the newly added claims 34 to 37, the examiner agrees with the applicants that Inoue in '881 does not teach a single individual reel, but this is a moot point, as this feature was not claimed in the amended claims of Sept. 27th, 2004. The inner and outer reels of '881 would be interpreted by one of ordinary skill in the art as a single functional reel. Both the inner and outer reels of '881 are concentric, rotating about the same axis in the same plane. The symbols of the inner reel are translucent allowing the player to see the background on the inner reel. The two reels working together have the same function as the single reel found in most gaming machines, so the application of this reference to the claims of Sept. 27th, 2004 was reasonable. The examiner interpreted the claims as broadly as was reasonable. The claims were interpreted in light of the specification without reading the limitations of the specification into the claims.

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6. The examiner respectfully disagrees with the applicants' position as to allowability.

7. Applicant's arguments with respect to Claims 1 and 3 to 33 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

8. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

9. The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

10. Claims 8, 15, 23, 31, and 34 to 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter that was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

11. As to Claims 8, 15, 23, and 31: The specification states that the reels may be physical reels driven by stepper motors (Page 3, Lines 29 and 30), so at first glance, it appears that Claims 8, 15, 23, and 31 are enabled by the specification. The only embodiment, however, described in detail in the specification is the embodiment in which the reels, including the continuous graphical element and discrete symbols, are displayed on a video display such as an LCD or CRT. Independent Claims 1 and 18 claim a reel bearing a plurality of discrete symbols and a continuous graphical element. Independent Claims 9 and 25 claim a reel bearing a plurality of discrete symbol positions and a continuous graphical

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element. These independent claims go on to claim the reel rotating, with the continuous graphical element moving at one velocity, and the discrete symbols or symbol positions moving at a second velocity. The specification clearly enables these independent claims for the video display embodiment, shown in Figs. 3 to 6, and discussed from Page 4, Line 26 to Page 7, Line 24. These independent claims, however, are not enabled for a mechanical reel. Nowhere in the specification is the operation of the invention for an embodiment involving mechanical reels discussed in detail. Only on Page 3, Lines 29 and 30, are mechanical reels driven by stepper motors mentioned.

12. The claims as worded could be reasonably interpreted by one of ordinary skill in the art to mean a mechanical reel, with a continuous graphical element forming a background (such as a trail, road, or racetrack) silk-screened onto the reel, with a set of discrete symbols or symbol positions (such as typical slot symbols lemons, cherries, etc.) silk-screened over the continuous graphical element. Nothing in the specification indicates anything else. In such an embodiment, it would be impossible to move the continuous graphical element at one velocity and the discrete symbols or symbol positions at a second velocity, as they are both graphical representations on the same reel and can only move together at the same velocity as the reel is being rotated. It is obvious that they could move at different velocities in the video display embodiment, as symbols on a computer display can be programmed to move in any way desired. The examiner has several years of experience in aircraft simulation and knows much about aircraft instruments, which are mechanical indicators like slot machine

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reels. The only way to implement the two different velocities in a mechanical reel would be to have the continuous graphical element printed on the reel, so it can move at one velocity while the reel is being rotated, and to have the symbol or symbols moving superimposed over the reel, but not actually on it. The symbol or symbols could take the form of a needle, such as on a speedometer, or a "bug," such as the round, pink maximum airspeed symbol on an aircraft's airspeed indicator. The symbol in the form of needle or bug would be driven by a separate drive, such as a servo, synchro, or D'Arsonval mechanism, and would move independently of and in front of the rotating reel to give the discrete symbol its second velocity. If this were the case, the reel would no longer bear the discrete symbols, since they would not be on the reel or driven by it. Another way to implement the two different velocities of the continuous graphical element and discrete symbols would be to use the opaque inner reel and transparent outer reel of Inoue (U.S. patent 5,395,111 A), by the same inventor as the '881 reference cited in the previous action. One of ordinary skill in the art could reasonably consider the inner and outer reels of Inoue ('881) to be a single reel, since they are concentric, rotating about the same point in the same plane, and are used in place of and for the same function as the single reel used in most slot machines. There simply is no way to mechanically implement these claims with both the continuous graphical element and the discrete symbols being borne on the same individual reel. Claims 1, 8, 18, and 25 are only operative in the video format, not the mechanical format.

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13. As to Claims 34 to 37: These claims were obviously introduced to overcome the '881 reference cited in the last office action. Page 3, Lines 29 and 30, cites stepper reels driven by stepper motors. The specification does not, however, say that a reel is only a single reel. This is a negative limitation that is found nowhere in the specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

14. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

15. Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

16. Claims 8, 15, 23, 31, and 34 to 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the disclosed invention is inoperative and therefore lacks utility. The invention in the mechanical reel embodiment is inoperative and lacks utility because the specification does not explain how one of ordinary skill in the art can make or use the invention using a mechanical reel as in Claims 8, 5, 23, and 31 or using a single reel as in Claims 34 to 37, for the reasons stated in the previous paragraphs above concerning the Section 112, first paragraph rejections. Specifically, if both the symbols and the continuous graphical element are borne on the same individual mechanical reel, they cannot move at two different velocities at the same time.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

17. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

18. A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

19. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

20. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
21. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
22. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
23. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

24. Claims 1 to 4, 7 to 11, 14 to 19, 22 to 27, and 30 to 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Davies (UK patent application publication GB 2 330 936 A, application 9823899.1) in view of Walker, et al. (U.S. patent 6,095,921 A).

25. As to Claim 1: Davies in '936 discloses all of the elements of Claim 1, but lacks specificity as to a continuous graphical element extending between adjacent ones of the discrete symbols such that the discrete symbols are unified by the graphical element. Davies in '936 teaches a slot machine (Page 1, Lines 4 to 8). '936 also teaches a rotatable reel (Fig. 1a) bearing a plurality of discrete symbols (Page 1, Lines 17 to 19). In '936, an inner band is driven at a first velocity, and an outer band is driven at a second velocity (Abstract; Page 6, Line

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21 to Page 7, Line 9). The bands are of different diameters, so it is inherent that the symbols on the two bands will move at different velocities, even if the two bands are driven at the same angular velocity. The abstract goes further and says the bands cannot move in unison, so they thus cannot move at the same angular velocity. If the bands did move in unison, the combination of symbols on the payline would never change. The slot machine of '936 is controlled by software (Page 1, Lines 19 to 22), so it would inherently have a processor. '936 stops the reel and the plurality of discrete symbols to place the discrete symbols on the reel in visual association with a display area (Page 2, Lines 2 to 8).

Walker, however, in '921 teaches a continuous graphical element (Figs. 4B-C). It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply the continuous graphical element of '921 to the slot machine of '936. It would be possible to support the reel strips of '921 (Figs. 4A-F) with either the reels of '936 (Fig. 1a) or the bands of '936 (Figs. 1c-e). '921 is driven by stepper motors (Col. 5, Lines 62 to 65), like '936 (Page 5, Lines 11 to 14). In one embodiment of '921, one reel of symbols is superimposed over another (Fig. 8), as is done in '936 (Abstract).

The strips of '921 can be strips of discrete symbols (Figs. 4D-F), like those of '936. '921 is controlled by a processor (Fig. 1), and has backlighting (Col. 8, Lines 21 to 23), like '936. The combination would yield a slot machine with the continuous graphical element on the inner band and a plurality of discrete symbols on the outer band. This would allow the reel to rotate the continuous graphical element at a first velocity and the symbols at a second velocity. The continuous graphical symbol would cover the entire width of the inner band ('921,

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Figs. 4B-C), extending between and visually unifying the symbols ('921, Fig. 4A) of the transparent outer band ('936, Abstract), which do not take up the full width of the band. The advantage of this combination would be to stimulate players' interest in the game by providing a visual contrast by having an inner band with a continuous background (graphical element), and a transparent outer band with symbols superimposed over the background. The continuous background would provide an appealing contrast without interfering with the players' ability to clearly see the symbols.

26. As to Claims 3 and 24: '921 has a payable for determining the payout based on the symbols displayed in the display area (Col. 4, Lines 57 to Col. 5, Line 3).

27. As to Claims 4, 11, 19, and 27: '921 teaches a continuous graphical element (Figs. 4B-C). In '936, the symbols on the transparent outer band are superimposed over the inner band (Abstract).

28. As to Claims 7, 14, 22, and 30: The reels of '921 can be displayed on an LCD (Col. 7, Lines 63 to 66).

29. As to Claims 8, 15, 23, and 31: The mechanical reels of '936 are driven by stepper motors (Page 5, Lines 11 to 14).

30. As to Claim 9: Davies in '936 teaches a slot machine (Page 1, Lines 4 to 8). '936 also teaches a rotatable reel (Fig. 1a) having a plurality of discrete symbol positions (plurality of symbols stopped at discrete positions, Claims 1 and 3). In '936, an inner band is driven at a first velocity, and an outer band is driven at a second velocity (Abstract; Page 6, Line 21 to Page 7, Line 9). The slot

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machine of '936 is controlled by software (Page 1, Lines 19 to 22), so it would inherently have a processor. '936 stops the reel and the plurality of discrete symbols to place the discrete symbols on the reel in visual association with a display area (Page 2, Lines 2 to 8). '921 teaches a continuous graphical element (Figs. 4B-C). It would be possible to support the reel strips of '921 (Figs. 4A-F) with either the reels of '936 (Fig. 1a) or the bands of '936 (Figs. 1c-e). '921 is driven by stepper motors (Col. 5, Lines 62 to 65), like '936 (Page 5, Lines 11 to 14). The combination would yield a slot machine with the continuous graphical element on the inner band and a plurality of discrete symbols on the outer band. This would allow the reel to rotate the continuous graphical element at a first velocity and the symbols at a second velocity. The continuous graphical symbol would cover the entire width of the inner band ('921, Figs. 4B-C), extending between and visually unifying the symbols ('921, Fig. 4A) of the transparent outer band ('936, Abstract), which do not take up the full width of the band.

31. As to Claims 10 and 26: '936 teaches a rotatable reel (Fig. 1a) having a plurality of discrete symbol positions (plurality of symbols stopped at discrete positions, in visual association with a display area, Claims 1 and 3).

32. As to Claims 16, 17, 32, and 33: '429 teaches determining a payout based on movement of a discrete symbols between adjacent symbol positions (Col. 13, Lines 39 to 63), and the payout accumulating based on each position traversed by the symbol (the total expected payout of the board based on probability of landing at each position and payout of each position (Col. 13, Line 64 to Col. 14, Line 19). The trail of '429 can be thought of as a loop, since it can be cycled

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through multiple times by rolling the dice (Col. 13, Lines 43 to 54). It can thus be applied to one of the bands of '936 as the bands of '936 repeat multiple times as they spin around.

33. As to Claim 18: Davies in '936 teaches a slot machine (Page 1, Lines 4 to 8) controlled by a processor (software inherently controlled by processor, Page 1, Lines 19 to 22). '921 teaches receiving a wager from a player (coin acceptor 124, Fig. 1). '936 also teaches a rotatable reel (Fig. 1a) bearing a plurality of discrete symbols (Page 1, Lines 17 to 19). In '936, an inner band is driven at a first velocity, and an outer band is driven at a second velocity (Abstract; Page 6, Line 21 to Page 7, Line 9). '936 stops the reel and the plurality of discrete symbols to place the discrete symbols on the reel in visual association with a display area (Page 2, Lines 2 to 8). Walker in '921 teaches a continuous graphical element (Figs. 4B-C). It would be possible to support the reel strips of '921 (Figs. 4A-F) with either the reels of '936 (Fig. 1a) or the bands of '936 (Figs. 1c-e). The combination would yield a slot machine with the continuous graphical element on the inner band and a plurality of discrete symbols on the outer band. This would allow the reel to rotate the continuous graphical element at a first velocity and the symbols at a second velocity. The continuous graphical symbol would cover the entire width of the inner band ('921, Figs. 4B-C), extending between and visually unifying the symbols ('921, Fig. 4A) of the transparent outer band ('936, Abstract), which do not take up the full width of the band.

34. As to Claim 25: Davies in '936 teaches a slot machine (Page 1, Lines 4 to 8) controlled by a processor (software inherently controlled by processor, Page 1,

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Lines 19 to 22). '936 also teaches a rotatable reel (Fig. 1a) having a plurality of discrete symbol positions (plurality of symbols stopped at discrete positions, Claims 1 and 3). '921 teaches receiving a wager from a player (coin acceptor 124, Fig. 1). In '936, an inner band is driven at a first velocity, and an outer band is driven at a different second velocity (Abstract; Page 6, Line 21 to Page 7, Line 9). Walker in '921 teaches a continuous graphical element (Figs. 4B-C). It would be possible to support the reel strips of '921 (Figs. 4A-F) with either the reels of '936 (Fig. 1a) or the bands of '936 (Figs. 1c-e). The combination would yield a slot machine with the continuous graphical element on the inner band and a plurality of discrete symbol positions on the outer band. This would allow the reel to rotate the continuous graphical element at a first velocity and the symbol positions at a different second velocity. The continuous graphical symbol would cover the entire width of the inner band ('921, Figs. 4B-C), extending between and visually unifying the symbols ('921, Fig. 4A) of the transparent outer band ('936, Abstract), which do not take up the full width of the band.

35. As to Claim 26: '936 stops the reel and the plurality of discrete symbols to place the discrete symbols on the reel in visual association with a display area (Page 2, Lines 2 to 8).

36. As to Claims 34 to 37: '936 teaches only a single reel in Figs. 1b and 1c.

37. Claims 5, 6, 12, 13, 20, 21, 28, and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Davies ('936) and Walker ('921) in view of Demar, et al. (U.S. patent 6,203,429 B1).

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38. As to Claims 5 and 6: The combination of Davies ('936) and Walker ('921) discloses all of the elements of Claim 5, but lacks specificity as to the graphical element including a trail in the form of a game board path. Demar, however, in '429 teaches a graphical element that is a trail in the form of a game board path (300, Fig. 8; Col. 12, Lines 29 to 34). It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply the trail of '429 to the combination of '936 and '921. '429 is a slot machine (Fig. 8), like the games of '936 and '921. The trail of '429 can be thought of as a loop, since it can be cycled through multiple times by rolling the dice (Col. 13, Lines 43 to 54). It would thus be natural to apply the trail of '429 to one of the bands of '936 as the bands of '936 repeat multiple times as they spin around. Each position on the game board trail has a payout value (Col. 13, Lines 64 to 67), much like symbols on slot reels have relative values, with payline combinations of all one symbol having higher payouts than payline combinations of all of another symbol ('921, Fig. 2B, three cherries pay 20 on first coin, three bars pay fifty on first coin). The advantage of this combination would be to enhance interest in the game by providing a consistent, predictable theme (in this case, a popular board game) for the continuous background.

39. As to Claims 12, 13, 20, 21, 28, and 29: Demar in '429 teaches a graphical element which is a trail in the form of a game board path (300, Fig. 8; Col. 12, Lines 29 to 34).

Citation of Pertinent Prior Art

40. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Saffari, et al. in U.S. patent 5,769,716 A teach a symbol fall game with discrete symbol positions. Scully in U.S. patent 4,244,143 A teaches a highway game in which cars move at different speeds over moving reels. Inoue in U.S. patents 5,395,111 A and 5,752,881 A teaches reel symbols moving at different speeds. Takemoto, et al. in U.S. patent 5,655,965 A teaches a reel symbol moving at different speeds while staying in a display area. Lucero, et al. in U.S. patent 4,283,709 A teach slot reels moving at different rates. Markowicz, et al. in U.S. patent 5,938,200 A teach symbols moving across discrete symbol positions. Okada in U.S. patent 5,024,439 A teaches symbols moving at fast and slow speeds. Kojima in U.S. patent 5,265,889 A teaches a game with a reel that is a continuous path. Watts in UK patent application publication GB 2 165 074 A teaches reels with symbols moving at different rates.

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Conclusion

41. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Matthew D. Hoel whose telephone number is (571) 272-5961. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon. to Fri., 8:00

A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

42. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Xuan M. Thai can be reached on (571) 272-7147. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

43. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Matthew D. Hoel, Patent Examiner
AU 3713



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SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TC3700